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Books: Birds of Yorkton-Duck Mountain

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species banded, totals of each vulture species, each owl species and each other raptor species banded, totals of the top ten seabird species and total birds banded at the top ten banding sites. A map shows banding localities.) MKM

Colour-ringed Kelp Gulls – coming to a beach near you? P. Whittington. 2003. *Afring News* 32:70. Dept. Zool., Univ. Port Elizabeth, Box 1600, Port Elizabeth, 6000, South Africa (Over 1,000 chicks were color-banded at two sites in South Africa's Cape region in Nov.-Dec. 2003 to study post-fledging dispersal.) MKM

Notes: Special thanks to Jack E. Fletcher for his attempts to e-mail his tribute to Eugene Kridler and for sending a media CD of it when neither computer available to me would open the e-mailed copy.

In 1973, The Wildlife Society started to publish *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, primarily to publish notes and papers on techniques, leaving more room in *Journal of Wildlife Management* for more results-oriented papers. Now, abstractor Steven Gabrey has informed me that the two journals are being merged back together, with *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 33, 2006, constituting the last volume of the separate journal.

Robert C. Tweit, former WBBA Editor and former WBBA President, has ceased to abstract *Journal of Field Ornithology* and *Western Birds*. New volunteer abstractors for these would be welcome. Bob will continue his long-time abstracting services to NABB readers by covering *Bulletin of the Texas Ornithological Society* and *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*.

SG = Steven Gabrey
MKM = Martin K. McNicholl

Books

BIRDS OF YORKTON-DUCK MOUNTAIN. By C. Stuart Houston and William Anaka. 2003. Saskatchewan Natural History Society (Nature Saskatchewan) Spec. Publ. No. 24, Regina, SK. ii + 318 pp. \$ 20.00 Can.

Books on birds of specific geographic areas vary widely in the amount of information that they contain, varying from vague accounts of the more common, pretty, and/or sensational species of the area covered to detailed avifaunal accounts. The Saskatchewan Natural History Society's special publication series has always been exemplary in presenting detailed, thorough information. This is the third in the series to be co-authored by Stuart Houston, one of western Canada's foremost ornithologists, banders and historians of natural history. It is also the fourth book to be co-authored by Stuart in a 16-month period—two books on birds of specific regions of Saskatchewan, one book on historical natural history observations in Arctic regions of Canada by Hudson's Bay Company officials, and one on the history of medicine in Saskatchewan. These books join a long list of Stuart's publications on birds and history, most of which have been

authored in his "spare" time while engaged in his professional career as a prominent medical doctor, professor and researcher.

Although all of the books in this publication series interest me, receipt of this one brought special delight for three reasons. First, my first journal publication, albeit an unintentional one, concerned this area. In 1963, my aunt's roommate, the late Ruth Halford, gave me the 1961 issues of *The Blue Jay*, Saskatchewan's excellent natural history journal. I greatly enjoyed these issues and mailed off my first subscription to a natural history journal. Of particular interest to me in the 1961 issues were three accounts of Bank Swallows nesting in gravel stock piles. As I had observed Bank Swallow holes in such piles near Foam Lake, Leslie and Theodore, all in the area of this book, on my first visit to Saskatchewan in the summer of 1963, I mentioned this in my enthusiastic teenage subscription letter to the Treasurer and was amazed to see this letter in print early the next year (McNicholl 1964). Secondly, while studying at the University of Alberta in the early 1970s, I also traveled through the area several times en

route to and from family visits to Winnipeg and once, after a conference in Regina, camped with Phillip S. Taylor in 1972 in a community pasture at one of the Quill Lakes just inside or outside the northwestern corner of the area, where we were overwhelmed by huge flocks of Sandhill Cranes and found Taylor's "life" Smith's Longspur among flocks of Laplands (McNicholl and Taylor 1972). Although several large flocks of Smith's Longspurs were observed in the area in the 1940s, the only record listed for the area after 1959 was a flock of 20-30 in 1975. The third reason relates to my long held interest in the history of ornithology and other aspects of natural history, an interest that was kindled initially by Houston's first contribution to this series (Houston and Street 1959) and stimulated frequently by many of his subsequent publications. Although long associated with Saskatoon, Houston's roots were in Yorkton, where his interests in banding and ornithology developed. One of his earliest major publications (Houston 1949) was an account of its avifauna, and this book can be regarded as a much expanded update of that significant paper.

The book begins with a series of introductory sections (Table of Contents, Foreword by J. Frank Roy, Introduction and Acknowledgements.) The introduction includes a few opening paragraphs outlining Houston's roots in the area, a brief description of the area, which is sandwiched along the Manitoba border between the areas covered by Manley Callin's (1980) account of the birds of the Qu'Appelle Valley to the south and Hooper's (1992) account of the birds of the Kelvington to Kelsey Trail area to the north, brief accounts of the published and unpublished sources on which the book is based, an overview of the organization of each species account, a long (over five pages) key to abbreviations, 57 mini-biographies of naturalists who have reported records of birds observed in the area, acknowledgements and a brief account of potentially confusing locations. Although primarily a Saskatchewan book, some significant records from the adjacent Manitoba portion of the Duck Mountains are included. The bulk of the text (pp. 41-278) consists of species accounts. This is followed by five appendices (species lists for eight portions of the region, data

from five Breeding Bird Survey routes in the region, banding details for 174 species banded and/or recovered in the region, waterfowl banding totals of 51 banders and Ducks Unlimited in the region, and map sheet numbers of 10-minute geographic blocks in the region), a 25-page list of references and a short addendum on 2003 name changes. Although Stuart Houston keeps current with ornithological events in the area through his many connections there and by visiting relatives regularly during his long residence in Saskatoon, he has assured completeness by collaborating with one of the outstanding local resident naturalists of the area, William Anaka. Their wives (Mary Houston and Joyce [Gunn] Anaka) are also listed on the cover as major assistants, well deserved recognition.

The bulk of the text (pp. 41-278) consists of accounts of 305 species confirmed to have been observed in the area plus three others on Saskatchewan's "hypothetical" list. When available and relevant, each species account consists of sections on status, history, "observations and comments," migration dates, breeding information, summer occurrence, Christmas Bird Count data, winter, banding effort, banding recoveries within and outside of the area, banding returns and information specific to two areas [Langenburg and Duck Mountain] within the area. "Observations and comments" include varying details on behavioral observations, flock sizes, documented foods, miscellaneous natural history details and population trends within the study area, while breeding information includes whatever local details are known about nest sites, clutch sizes, nesting chronology, and nesting success. Several amusing anecdotes and noteworthy natural history details are enclosed in boxes with a gray background. Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism is mentioned under each species documented as a host within the area, with a summary list of the 19 documented host species in the cowbird account.

Banding content is considerable, as would be expected in a book co-authored by two banders. The book's cover is a photograph of Houston's banding mentor, Isabel M. Priestly, about to release a banded bittern. Houston's banding

started in the area in 1943 under an "underage banding permit." By the time the book was written, 266,644 birds of 174 species had been banded in the area. Each species account lists numbers banded in the area and Appendix 3 lists numbers of each species banded before 1955 by Houston and five other banders or groups of banders, as well as post 1955 bandings by all banders, the grand total for each species, recoveries banded and recovered in the area, total recoveries, percent recovered and percent recovered outside the area. Appendix 4 lists totals of 52 banders for 13 waterfowl species and one hybrid taxon in the area. Banding efforts in the area are also included in the mini-biographies of each naturalist whose efforts in the area included banding. Banding results are most detailed for nine waterfowl species and American Coots, with maps of recoveries accompanying each. Additional details include results of a transmitter study of Mallards. A couple of corrections are also included. An apparent recovery near Foam Lake of a very extralimital Mottled Duck was revealed to have resulted from the finding of the band near the edge of the lake, most likely dropped by a visiting hunter. A transcription error resulting in an apparently significant Downy Woodpecker dispersal record (Brewer *et al.* 2000:49) is corrected to having been banded at the same location as recovered. Perhaps the most remarkable recovery was that of a Lower Rousay Lake-banded Swainson's Hawk that was shot in Alabama, providing the first state record of that species. One of Houston's 952 Great Horned Owl bandings provided a new longevity record of 13 years, seven months (since exceeded), while one of Anaka's several Downy Woodpecker longevity records was Canada's longest at nine years, one month. A nestling-banded American Crow provided the second oldest longevity record of 12 years at the time it was recovered and a Black-capped Chickadee recovered nine years after banding tied the longevity record at the time of recovery. Numerous other band recovery records included in the species accounts provide evidence of dispersal and/or migration routes of Saskatchewan-breeding or wintering birds. Banding efforts also provided both the earliest and latest fall dates of Fox Sparrows in Yorkton at the time of banding. The

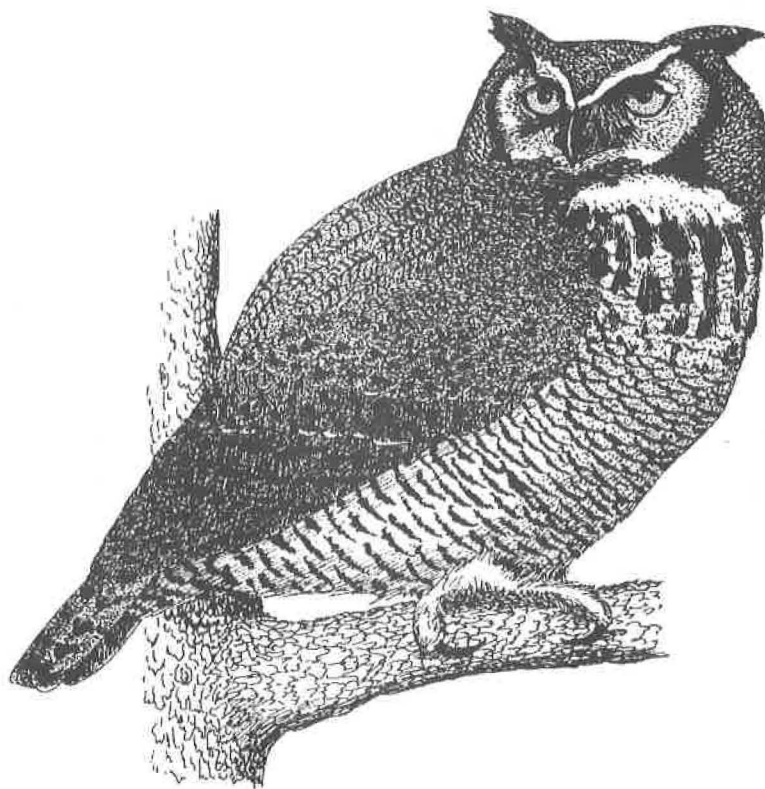
only two Lincoln's Sparrow recoveries banded elsewhere both provided evidence of speed of migration. One had been banded in Oklahoma 14 days earlier, the other in North Dakota 12 days earlier. That some birds can survive severe injuries was illustrated by a one-legged grackle banded in 1944 and observed during the next four consecutive summers until found dead in 1948.

The high quality set by Houston and Street (1959) in the first of the avifaunal works in this series of special publications has not only been maintained but also continuously improved. This contribution continues that tradition. Errors are few and minor. A 1981 report by David Hatch and Donald Weidl on Duck Mountain Provincial Park cited in numerous species accounts is mentioned in the introduction (pp. 19-20), but not listed among the references and thus may be missed by readers searching avifaunal works for information on individual species. Two other references cited [Leighton *et al.* 2001 on p. 116 and Shaw 1942 on p. 121] appear not to be in the reference list. These appear to be "typos" for references listed by the same authors in 2002 and 1947 respectively. The volume of *Auk* containing McKim's 1926 note on Western Kingbird should be 43, not 4. The hyphen is omitted from the journal *Bird-Banding* in at least two references. There are a few other very minor glitches that escaped proof-readers, none of which detract from the overall high quality of this book. As noted above, the species accounts are based on a thorough search of literature published in scientific journals, magazines, and newspapers, as well as several data bases and unpublished field notes of many naturalists in the area.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that the immediately preceding volume in this series is a high quality multi-authored volume on the birds of the Saskatoon area edited by Leighton *et al.* (2002). In addition to his role as co-editor of this volume, Stuart Houston is a contributor of several species accounts and has added banding effort and encounter information to each relevant species account. Banders contemplating avifaunal accounts of other regions should consider both these volumes as "must consult" contributions on which to model their own efforts.

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Great Horned Owl
by George West